

WORKING WITH YOUR UNIVERSITY

OUR IMPACT
IN 2021 - 22



University
of Suffolk

A GROUNDBREAKING YEAR



Achievements

The 2021/22 year marks the first full year of operation for the Business Engagement, Careers and Employability Directorate (BECE). We have laid the foundations for our future impact, hiring new staff, developing our 2030 strategy and establishing exciting partnerships.

As our Alumni network has grown locally, nationally, and internationally, so has the support on offer, resulting in more Alumni engagements than ever before. Our increased focus on Development and Giving has seen the University receive its 3 largest donations, with a further 4 significant pledges being secured and 3 further 5 to 6 figure gifts in cultivation stage. We are confident this will continue to be an area of significant growth.

Our most recent Graduate Outcomes (GO) results saw 92% of students in employment or further study, with 82% in highly skilled roles, compared to a sector average of 78%, results we will continue to improve upon. We have enhanced our offer to students, with more events, opportunities and employer linkages. Work is underway to embed Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship into the curriculum, with additional investment secured to double the team in size and establish a dedicated careers hub.

Our Business Development and Knowledge Exchange team has generated over £1.8m in knowledge exchange income (a 500% increase in since 2017/18), collaborating with over 200 businesses. Our newly formed, and unique, partnership with the Innovation Labs Group launched in January 2022 – with more members accessing our facilities and engaging with the wider University and business support ecosystem, harnessing our student and academic expertise.

Following an Ofsted inspection in May 2022 we were recognised as being 'Good' in our apprenticeship provision. This was a fantastic outcome, recognising the work and investment across the University to ensure our apprentices and employers are at the heart of our programmes. This has helped to raise the University's profile, supporting our journey and vision of becoming an outstanding provider. We will now further expand our apprenticeship provision to support local and regional skills needs.

BECE had a successful inaugural year delivering real-world impact, and this review applauds our major achievements.



Good Jobs

Pro Vice-Chancellor,
Business and Entrepreneurship

Rated **G** **d**
by Ofsted for
Apprenticeship delivery

80% overall
apprenticeship
achievement

Apprenticeship
Retention at
95%

1620
students engaged
in employability &
enterprise sessions

51,000+
activities
completed in
FutureMe

152%
increase in
student
micro-placement
applications

12 student &

82%
of graduates in high
skilled employment

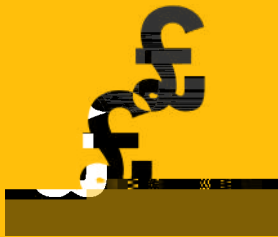
20%
increase in alumni
engagement



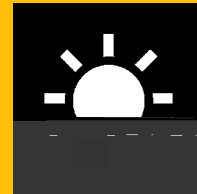
250
businesses engaged



4 new partnerships with large companies



2,125,000
Knowledge Exchange income generated



4 roof of concept projects supported



Increased **40** places in national KTP rankings



2 international Knowledge Exchange programmes delivered



2,300,000
donated or pledged



shortlisted for 'best engagement campaign' at the HEIST awards



100+ individual supporters engaged



1,250,000
highest ever individual donation



RICHARD

MICRO-PLACEMENT

My experience with the Student Experience Ambassadors (SEAs) was a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. The team were very welcoming and have helped me learn about their role and the more complicated inner-workings of the University of Suffolk. I helped with many tasks, and I was able to take part in meetings and contribute any ideas and thoughts I had that could help the team. As I was a current student this helped massively as the team work with students on a daily basis.

CONFIDENCE

Whilst working with the Student Experience Ambassadors, my confidence overall has improved, with even my family and friends noting the change. Before I started my micro-placement, I was a very shy person with little confidence. Working with the SEAs has helped me massively.

I feel that my public speaking greatly improved from my placement, particularly as a result of tasks that required me to talk to students around the campus. I had to explain different events that were coming up, for example Mental Health Awareness Week. I helped the team explain what this was, why it was important to students, and the activity happening over the week for them to engage with.

AMBIENT

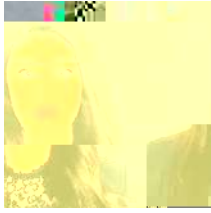
The Student Experience Ambassadors work in a professional environment, and they have their own office located above the library group working spaces. Working in the office has prepared me for working in the future.

OUTLOOK

When I finished University I applied for a Student Experience Ambassador role and got it. I would like to thank the Careers team for all their support with the micro-placement and with helping me get into my first graduate job.

Not wanting to stop my educational journey at the University of Suffolk after graduating from BSc Human Health and Nutrition, I decided to study MSc Regenerative Medicine. I wanted something which would set me apart from other potential candidates when it came to interviews and had already enjoyed my years of undergraduate study at the University, impressed with the lab facilities and support available.

The hard work paid off and I was able to secure my first job interview



AMINA ANWAR

BA Business Management and Law

Digital Sales Performance Director

PACE Digital Sales

I initially started at the University of East Anglia pursuing an education in Biological Sciences. However, things do not always go to plan and after a year and half of commuting to Norwich, I decided I wanted to pursue a different career path and transferred to the University of Suffolk, where I felt at home straight away, as a previous college student at West Suffolk College. The campus, lectures and the teaching environment was exactly what I was used to and made me feel very comfortable. Not only that, I was able to continue finding a part-time job to build my experience as well as manage my workload at university.

Choosing a combined honours degree opened up several career path options and allowed me to explore different areas of Business and Law. However, both became very relevant to the career I have since pursued. The University gave me the theory based knowledge which has been applied into my new role. Outside of the core modules, the University enhanced many skills by running workshops and inviting local Businesses to come in and share insights into their organisations which made students think differently.

The lecturers were also very keen and passionate about students setting up their profiles on LinkedIn and preparing a professional profile for when we left University, a tool which I now regularly use and since leaving have used in my everyday professional job, so if you are not on LinkedIn – I highly suggest it.

Since graduating in 2018, I took a risk and joined a start-up inside sales business – which only hired graduates. For me at the time, it was important for me to join an organisation which valued my degree. I knew very little about the industry but, the Managing Director had a great sales training programme that I was taken through. Fast forward 3 years I have grown from within the graduate model and I am now the newly appointed Sales Performance Director for PACE.

My role is to oversee the strategy that supports recruitment, hiring, training and the supervision of the Sales and Business Development teams. The support, training and development I have received over the last 3 years has transformed me from a young graduate into a business professional. My aim is to further coach, mentor and inspire the next future sale leaders by ensuring they have the confidence and experience to break down glass ceilings in the sales industry.

At the age of only 25, I have achieved an incredible amount, which all started by pursuing a degree and gaining invaluable skills and the confidence I needed to pursue a career professionally. I have still maintained a great relationship with the lecturers at the University and I hope I can share my journey with future students.

CPD AND CONSULTANCY



M M
Programme Director, Tipe Ltd

• Evidence of Impact of CPD

A consumer regulatory body approached the University to enquire about the creation of some Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for their staff around witness statement preparation and witness familiarisation. The organisation then visited the University to look at our facilities. The mock court was well received, and it was agreed that by participating in CPD within a court environment staff would feel much better equipped when faced with a real-life court scenario.

Briefing

The relationship between successful start-up TIPE (Trauma Informed Practice Environments) and University of Suffolk began in March 2022 when the company approached the University for academic expertise. TIPE had created and delivered two widely acclaimed programmes, for which they have a continuous demand – iCoN (in Control of Now) brings together young people with difficult and challenging behaviours alongside their sector workers and other key professionals to better understand their behaviour and its causes. TIL (Trauma Informed Learning Environments) helps mainstream, specialist and alternative education providers to engage with schools in establishing their own trauma-informed and attachment-based learning environment.



Several projects have taken place between the organisations with more planned. These include consultancy, the creation of bespoke CPD and research.

C

Dr Rachael Martin Senior Lecturer in Psychology initially provided expertise to deliver specialist knowledge sessions for social workers in Redbridge working in youth justice, as part of the company's iCoN and TILE programmes. This led to further discussions with other academics providing their expertise to enhance course content. Knowledge was exchanged from chartered psychologist and Counselling course leader Professor Sarah Corrie, and lecturer Vicky Lucas who has nineteen years of experience as a Mental Health Nurse & Psychotherapist.

C D

Following from her initial engagement with TIPE, and the identification of a market gap, Sarah Corrie worked with the company and Professor David Lane, director and co-founder



CHALLENGE LAB

An interactive Challenge Lab to address the impact of long COVID on sleep and mental health outcomes.



With much of the population contracting COVID and with approximately 3% going on to develop long COVID, our health system faces one of the largest mental health crises. The Challenge Lab set out to identify solutions to address this growing challenge.



16 individuals attended, representing the following external organisations: the University of Suffolk, Willis Towers Watson, Treatt, BT, Home Start, NHS Suffolk & North Essex, Suffolk County Council, Active Suffolk, and Mind Suffolk.



Facilitated interactive sessions enabled participants to represent their unique view and experience to address this challenge creatively. Specific challenge areas were identified and teams worked on challenge areas, developing ideas and solutions and pitching for resources to take the idea forward.



Four key projects were defined to be taken forward:

- Gold Standard for employers supporting employees with long COVID.
- Educating people to get better sleep.
- Community based exercise groups.
- Improving breathing awareness and control in those with long COVID.

Paul Putland, BT Health Innovation Hub Manager, Applied Research Accelerator

Paul Putland
BT Health Innovation Hub Manager
Applied Research Accelerator



BLUE NOVATION

CONTRACT RESEARCH WITH BLUE NOVATION



Training provider Blue Novation required expertise to assess the issues and needs of the target audience for a new Virtual Reality (VR) product they wished to develop, before making significant investment.



Following COVID, the company were aware that they needed to future-proof their business; providing innovative solutions to help clients achieve higher level skills that met the requirements of a rapidly changing and challenging workplace.



- Desk-based review into the communication skills gap in the tech industry.
- Focus groups with both students and tech industry employees to understand how to create a VR environment where both will master communication skills and to understand what the current issues.
- Academic staff worked with Blue Novation on interview design and analysed the results.



This project accessed expertise from the School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology and the School of Social Sciences and Humanities

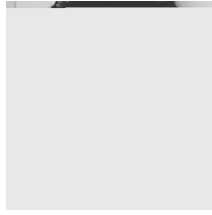


Blue Novation can now act on the report recommendations to implement this new business offering. Also, the business benefitted from Innovation Voucher funding; receiving a 75% financial subsidy.

Working with Blue Novation, we conducted a desk-based review into the communication skills gap in the tech industry. We also conducted focus groups with both students and tech industry employees to understand how to create a VR environment where both will master communication skills and to understand what the current issues are. Academic staff worked with Blue Novation on interview design and analysed the results.

Trudy Sore, MD, Blue Novation Ltd

OUR SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICES



**LAURA
HARRIDENCE**

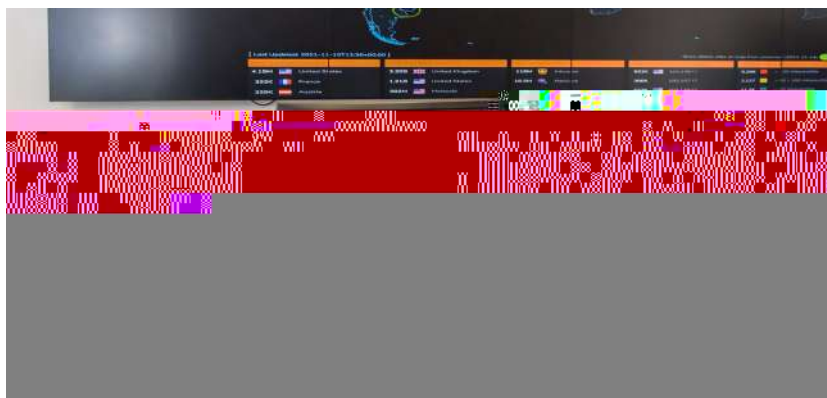
Quality Assurance Professional, BT

Laura has been working at BT for 37 years and has held numerous management positions over that time. Laura's most current role as a Quality Assurance Professional aims to support apprentices in receiving a positive, safe and consistent apprenticeship experience, by working closely with external training providers to ensure quality education.

BT has used apprenticeships as a platform to hire, develop and retain great people for over 60 years, so has a lot of experience in welcoming apprentices and making sure that they have a great learning experience as they develop the job skills needed in order to be successful. Laura feels that apprentices bring fresh ideas and new perspectives to the business, which is truly valued.

At BT, apprenticeships are used to help the organisation grow their own talent in areas where they have identified future skills gaps – such as in Digital and Cyber Security at higher or degree levels. BT has a very high retention rate, with many apprentices staying and progressing throughout the company many years after their apprenticeship comes to an end.

Laura works collaboratively with the business and university to find creative ways to strike the balance between work and study commitments, with an additional focus on mental health and well-being.





ALEX PAYNE

BSc Digital and Technology
Solutions (Software Engineering)

Apprenticeship

Alex graduated from the University of Suffolk with a degree in BSc Digital and Technology Solutions (Software Engineering) and is working for BT as a member of the DevOps teams, ensuring key systems are operational, updated and free from vulnerabilities.

A typical working day includes various tasks such as writing test plans, research and responding to incidents and service requests as well as helping new apprentices to upskill and work within the team.

Looking back at his experience of his Tech Industry Gold Degree Apprenticeship, Alex praises his apprenticeship colleagues who, as a group including him, held regular knowledge sharing and revision sessions and push each other to do their best.

The biggest challenge, said Alex, was getting the right work, life and university balance all during the COVID-19 pandemic but he again praised the team around him for their support.

He said: "Having a great team around you makes all the difference in making this achievable."

Alex's team at BT continue to always ensure his degree came first, allowing him extra time to meet assignment deadlines. They also offered to proof read each assignment and provide valuable, constructive feedback.

During the development of his iOS app 'ReWired' which is a Stroke Recovery applications designed and developed for his dissertation, Alex's supervisor at university went above and beyond what was expected. He gained valuable connections who helped ensure the app would make a real difference and ensured he had support in areas outside his expertise like logo design.

Advice from Alex to anyone considering an apprenticeship is simple – be prepared to give it your all. It will be demanding at times but it will be worth it if you put the effort in and don't give up when the going gets tough.

Looking ahead, Alex will continue to progress his foundation of knowledge and technical skills within his current team as he gains further understanding around people management with the aim to hopefully manage a team in the future.



University of Suffolk

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Careers and Employability (BECE)

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